

GUNNER DEPEW

Albert N. Depew

EX-GUNNER AND CHIEF PETTY OFFICER, U. S. NAVY
MEMBER OF THE FOREIGN LEGION OF FRANCE
CAPTAIN GUN TURRET, FRENCH BATTLESHIP CASSARD
WINNER OF THE CROIX DE GUERRE

Copyright, 1918, by Reilly and Brown Co., Through Special Arrangements With the George Mathew Adams Service.

DEPEW GETS HIS FIRST EXPERIENCE IN THE FRONT LINE TRENCHES AT DIXMUDE.

Synopsis.—Albert N. Depew, author of the story, tells of his service in the United States navy, during which he attained the rank of chief petty officer, first-class gunner. The world war starts soon after he receives his honorable discharge from the navy, and he leaves for France with a determination to enlist. He joins the Foreign Legion and is assigned to the dreadnaught Cassard, where his marksmanship wins him high honors. Later he is transferred to the land forces and sent to the Flanders front.

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

In the communication trench you have to keep your distance from the man ahead of you. This is done so that you will have plenty of room to fall down in, and because if a shell should find the trench, there would be fewer casualties in an open formation than in a closed. The German artillery is keen on communication trenches, and whenever they spot one they stay with it a long time. Most of them are camouflaged along the top and sides, so that enemy aviators cannot see anything but the earth or bushes, when they throw an eye down on our lines.

We took over our section of the front line trenches from a French line regiment that had been on the job for 24 days. That was the longest time I have heard of any troops remaining on the firing line.

Conditions at the front and ways of fighting are changing all the time, as each side invents new methods of butchering, so when I try to describe the Dixmude trenches, you must realize that it is probably just history by now. If they are still using trenches there they probably look entirely different.

But when I was at Dixmude they were something like this:

Behind the series of front-line trenches are the reserve trenches; in this case five to seven miles away, and still farther back are the billets. These may be houses or barns or ruined churches—any place that can possibly be used for quartering troops when off duty.

Troops were usually in the front-line trenches six to eight days, and fourteen to sixteen days in the reserve trenches. Then back to the billets for six or eight days.

We were not allowed to change our clothing in the front-line trenches—not even to remove socks, unless for inspection. Nor would they let you as much as unbuckle your shirt, unless there was an inspection of identification disks. We wore a disk at the wrist and another around the neck. You know the gag about the disks, of course: If your arm is blown off they can tell who you are by the neck disk; if your head is blown off, they do not care who you are.

In the reserve trenches you can make yourself more comfortable, but you cannot go to such extreme lengths of luxury as changing your clothes entirely. That is for billets, where you spend most of your time bathing, changing clothes, sleeping and eating. Believe me, a billet is great stuff; it is like a sort of temporary heaven.

Of course you know what the word "cooties" means. Let us hope you will never know what the cooties themselves mean. When you get in or near the trenches, you take a course in the natural history of bugs, lice, rats and every kind of pest that has ever been invented.

It is funny to see some of the newcomers when they first discover a cootie on them. Some of them cry. If they really knew what it was going to be like they would do worse than that, maybe.

Then they start hunting all over each other, just like monkeys. They team up for this purpose, and many times it is in this way that a couple of men get to be trench partners and come to be pals for life—which may not be a long time at that.

In the front-line trenches it is more comfortable to fall asleep on the parapet fire-step than in the dugouts, because the cooties are thicker down below, and they simply will not give you a minute's rest. They certainly are active little pests. We used to make back scratchers out of certain weapons that had flexible handles, but never had time to use them when we needed them most.

We were given bottles of a liquid which smelled like lysol and were supposed to soak our clothes in it. It was thought that the cooties would object to the smell and quit work. Well, a cootie that could stand our clothes without the dope on them would not be bothered by a little thing like this stuff. Also, our clothes got so sour and horrible smelling that they hurt

our noses worse than the cooties. They certainly were game little devils, and came right back at us.

So most of the poilus threw the dope at Fritz and fought the cooties hand to hand.

There was plenty of food in the trenches most of the time, though once in a while, during a heavy bombardment, the fatigue—usually a corporal's guard—would get killed in the communication trenches and we would not have time to get out to the fatigue and rescue the grub they were bringing. Sometimes you could not find either the fatigue or the grub when you got to the point where they had been hit.

But, as I say, we were well fed most of the time, and got second and third helpings until we had to open our belts. But as the Limeys say: "Gaw blimey, the chuck was rough." They served a thick soup of meat and vegetables in bowls the size of wash basins, black coffee with or without sugar—mostly without!—and plenty of bread.

Also, we had preserves in tins, just like the Limeys. If you send any parcels over, do not put any apple and plum jam in them or the man who gets it will let Fritz shoot him. Ask any Limey soldier and he will tell you the same. I never thought there was so much jam in the world. No Man's Land looked like a city dump. Most of us took it, after a while, just to get the bread. Early in the war they used the tins to make bombs of, but that was before Mills came along with his hand grenade. Later on they flattened out the tins and lined the dugouts with them.

Each man carried an emergency ration in his bag. This consisted of bully beef, biscuits, etc. This ration was never used except in a real emergency, because no one could tell when it might mean the difference between life and death to him. When daylight catches a man in a shell hole or at a listening post out in No Man's Land he does not dare to crawl back to his trench before nightfall, and then is the time that his emergency ration comes in handy. Also, the stores failed to reach us sometimes, as I have said, and we had to use the emergency rations.

Sometimes we received raw meat and fried it in our dugouts. We built



They Potted Huns by Guess Work.

regular clay ovens in the dugouts, with iron tops for broiling. This, of course, was in the front-line trenches only.

We worked two hours on the fire-step and knocked off for four hours. In which time we cooked and ate and slept. This routine was kept up night and day, seven days a week. Sometimes the program was changed; for instance, when there was to be an attack or when Fritz tried to come over and visit, but otherwise nothing disturbed our routine unless it was a gas attack.

The ambition of most privates is to become a sniper, as the official sharpshooters are called. After a private has been in the trenches for six months or a year and has shown his marksmanship, he becomes the great man he has dreamed about. We had

two snipers to each company and because they took more chances with their lives than the ordinary privates they were allowed more privileges. When it was at all possible our snipers were allowed dry quarters, the best of food, and they did not have to follow the usual routine, but came and went as they pleased.

Our snipers, as a rule, went over the parapet about dusk, just before Fritz got his star shells going. They would crawl out to shell craters or tree stumps or holes that they had spotted during the day—in other words, places where they could see the enemy parapets but could not be seen themselves. Once in position, they would make themselves comfortable, smear their tin hats with dirt, get a good rest for their rifles and snipe every German they saw. They wore extra bandoleers of cartridges, since there was no telling how many rounds they might fire during the night. Sometimes they had direct and visible targets and other times they potted Huns by guesswork. Usually they crawled back just before daylight, but sometimes they were out 24 hours at a stretch. They took great pride in the number of Germans they knocked over, and if our men did not get eight or ten they thought they had not done a good night's work. Of course it was not wholesale killing, like machine gunning, but it was very useful, because our snipers were always laying for the German snipers, and when they got Sniper Fritz they saved just so many of our lives.

The Limeys have a great little expression that means a lot: "Carry on." They say it is a cockney expression. When a captain falls in action, his words are not a message to the girl he left behind him or any dope about his gray-haired mother, but "Carry on, Lieutenant Wholes." If the lieutenant gets his it is "Carry on, Sergeant Jacks," and so on as far as it goes. So the words used to mean, "Take over the command and do the job right." But now they mean not only that but "Keep up your courage, and go to it." One man will say it to another sometimes when he thinks the first man is getting downhearted, but more often, if he is a Limey, he will start kidding him.

Our men, of course, did not say "Carry on," and in fact they did not have any expression in French that meant exactly the same thing. But they used to cheer each other along, all right, and they passed along the command when it was necessary, too. I wonder what expression the American troops will use. (You notice I do not call them Sammys!)

I took my turn at listening post with the rest of them, of course. A listening post is any good position out in No Man's Land, and is always held by two men. Their job is to keep a live ear on Fritz and in case they hear anything that sounds very much like an attack one man runs back to his trench and the other stays to hold back the Boches as long as he can. You can figure for yourself which is the most healthful job.

As many times as I went on listening-post duty I never did get to feeling homelike there exactly. You have to lie very still, of course, as Fritz is listening, too, and a move may mean a bullet in the ribs. So, lying on the ground with hardly a change of position, the whole lower part of my body would go to sleep before I had been at the post very long. I used to brag a lot about how fast I could run, so I had my turn as the runner, which suited me all right. But every time I got to a listening post and started to think about what I would do if Fritz should come over and wondered how good a runner he was, I took a long breath and said, "Feet, do your duty." And I was strong on duty.

After I had done my stint in the front-line and reserve trenches I went back with my company to billets, but had only been there for a day or two before I was detached and detailed to the artillery position to the right of us, where both the British and French had mounted naval guns. There were guns of all calibers there, both naval and field pieces, and I got a good look at the famous "75's," which are the best guns in the world, in my estimation, and the one thing that saved Verdun.

The "75's" fired 30 shots a minute, where the best German guns could do was six. The American three-inch field piece lets go six times a minute, too. The French government owns the secret of the mechanism that made this rapid fire possible. When the first "75's" began to roar, the Germans knew the French had found a new weapon, so they were very anxious to get one of the guns and learn the secret.

Shortly afterward they captured eight guns by a mass attack in which, the allies claim, there were 4,000 German troops killed. The Boches studied the guns and tried to turn out pieces like them at the Krupp factory. But somehow they could not get it. Their imitation "75's" would only fire five shots very rapidly and then "cough"—puff, puff, puff, with nothing coming out. The destructive power of the "75's" is enormous. These guns have saved the lives of thousands of poilus and Tommies and it is largely due to them that the French are now able to beat Fritz at his own game and give back shell for shell—and then some.

CHAPTER V.

With the "75's."

My pal Brown, of whom I spoke before, had been put in the infantry when he enlisted in the Legion, because he had served in the United States infantry. He soon became a sergeant, which had been his rating in the American service. I never saw

him in the trenches, because our units were nowhere near each other, but whenever we were in billets at the same time, we were together as much as possible.

Brown was a funny card and I never saw anyone else much like him. A big, tall, red-headed, dopey-looking fellow, never saying much and slow in everything he did or said—you would never think he amounted to much or was worth his salt. The boys used to call him "Ginger" Brown, both on account of his red hair and his slow movements. But he would pull a surprise on you every once in a while, like this one that he fooled me with.

One morning about dawn we started out for a walk through what used to be Dixmude—piles of stone and brick and mortar. There were no civvies to be seen; only mules and horses bringing up casks of water, bags of beans, chloride of lime, barbed wire, ammunition, etc. It was a good thing we were not superstitious. At that, the shadows along the walls made me feel shaky sometimes.

Finally Brown said: "Come on down; let's see the '75's." At this time I had not seen a "75," except on a train going to the front, so I took him up right away, but was surprised that he should know where they were.

After going half way around Dixmude Brown said, "Here we are," and started right into what was left of a big house. I kept wondering how he would know so much about it, but fol-



We Started Right into What Was Left of a Big House.

lowed him. Inside the house was a passageway under the ruins. It was about seven feet wide and fifty feet long. I should judge.

At the other end was the great old "75," poking its nose out of a hole in the wall. The gun captain and the crew were sitting around waiting the word for action, and they seemed to know Brown well. I was surprised at that, but still more so when he told me I could examine the gun if I wanted to, just as if he owned it.

So I sat in the seat and trained the cross wires on an object, opened and closed the breech and examined the recoil.

Then Brown said: "Well, think you'll see some real gunnery now," and they passed the word and took stations. My eyes bulged out when I saw Brown take his station with them.

"Silence!" is about the first command a gun crew gets when it is going into action, but I forgot all about it and shouted out and asked Brown how he got to be a gunner. But he only grinned and looked dopey, as usual. Then I came to and expected to get a call down from the officer, but he only grinned and so did the crew. It seems they had it all framed to spring on me, and they expected I would be surprised.

So we put cotton in our ears and the captain called the observation tower a short distance away and they gave him the range. Then the captain "called 4128 meters" to Brown. They placed the nose of a shell in a fuse adjuster and turned the handle until it reached scale 4128. This set the fuse to explode at the range given. Then they slammed the shell into the breech, locked it shut and Brown sent his best to Fritz.

The barrel slipped back, threw out the shell case at our feet and returned over a cushion of grease. Then we received the results by telephone from the observation tower. After he had fired twelve shots the captain said to Brown, "You should never waste yourself in infantry, son." And old dopey Brown just stood there and grinned.

That was Brown every time. He knew about more things than you could think of. He had read about gunnery and fooled around at Dixmude until they let him play with the "75's," and finally here he was, giving his kindest to old Fritz with the rest of them.

Members of the Foreign Legion, all soldiers of fortune, swear vengeance when they see the Germans place Belgian women and children in front of them as shields against the enemy's fire. Gunner Depew tells about this in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

She Won't Believe It.

A man may be a hopeless idiot, but if he admires a woman you can't convince her that he is crazy.

Trinidad is increasing its petroleum production, the output last year being almost 56,000,000 gallons.

BARBARA'S REPLY

By MILDRED G. PEASE.

(Copyright, 1918, by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate.)

"Which do you think would be prettier, mother," queried Barbara Stone, "green voile, with white trimmings, or a gray and coral combination?"

Both were poring over fashion sheets, and scarcely heard the sweet martial music which announced a big patriotic parade in the street below.

"Well, sea-green does sound"—Mrs. Stone was in the middle of a sentence when a peal of the door bell that startled her to her feet, sent Barbara flying to the door.

A military man was impatiently tapping his brown leather boot on the stone steps, and upon being admitted quickly made known his errand.

A young soldier who had come on from one of Uncle Sam's training camps to participate in the parade had been thrown from his horse in such a manner as to render him unable to proceed farther, and would they please accommodate him until the parade was over?

"Why certainly, right this way!"—and Barbara led the way to her mother's sitting room and turned down the divan bed. Her mother was equal to the occasion and started right away to make their unexpected guest comfortable.

The guest himself, a good-looking chap of about twenty-five years, was very sorry to disturb them, so he said, but he mentally remarked that it was fate that played him one good turn when she picked a bumpy horse for him to ride, since it gave him the chance to meet the beautiful girl who had opened the door.

The doctor who had been summoned, on his arrival advised him not to move for a week, at least, as his foot had received a very bad sprain.

Having introduced himself as Jack Carter to Mrs. Stone and making a very good impression on that estimable lady, it was not surprising that her daughter should do all in her power to add to their visitor's comfort. So, accordingly, Barbara brought up a tray laden with dainties that would tempt the most fastidious.

Being rather shy, she laid the tray down beside the bed and, thinking the young patient asleep, was tiptoeing out of the room when he startled her by saying: "Oh, I say, Miss Stone, would you spare a poor fellow a few minutes? It is rather dull, just looking up at the ceiling and watching the sun flicker up and down the wall."

She turned hesitatingly, wondering whether or not to stay; but he did look so boyish and dreadfully lonesome that she decided to read to him a bit. She picked up a magazine and was getting

him rather interested, when she felt a magnetism which seemed to draw her eyes away from the book and look in the direction of her listener. What was that indescribable feeling that surged through her? Nonsense! He was only a man among the many she had met; but still there was something different about him.

She finally laid down the book, and he thanked her heartily. She then withdrew from the room, with a promise to continue later.

Each day found her reading or chatting, until one afternoon, about four weeks from the date of his arrival, Jack stood, suitcase in hand, bidding farewell to Barbara. Seeing that her eyes were downcast, he bade her look up, but she refused, and upon closer view he discovered that her eyes were full of tears. "Oh, Barbara! Dear little girl; you are really sorry that I am going? I am sorry, too, dear, that I am going—alone. Could you consent to be my nurse always, dear?"

We do not know her answer, but suffice it to say that next day found Barbara and her mother busily addressing long, white envelopes, and a beautiful solitaire on Barbara's left hand denoted her answer.

Physiological.

"Man had his origin in an environment that subjected him to frequent, rapid and extreme changes from heat to cold, and from dryness to dampness," says Doctor James, "and from a study of his anatomy and physiology, as well as from the teaching of the law of Weismann, we know that we modern men are equipped with the same body device as were our Cromagnon progenitors. Weismann's law is to the effect that acquired characters are not transmitted, and its corollary is equally true, that unused or abused characters are not lost, so that we may think of all congenital characteristics, whether good or bad, as being entitled, and, as far as the race is concerned, as being permanent."—Exchange.

Laid the "Ghost."

A young man recently came to a doctor and his complaint was a rather extraordinary one. He had seen a ghost. The doctor asked him where he had seen it and what it was like. "I saw it," said he, "the other night when I was passing a graveyard; it had a big mouth and long ears like a donkey." "Go home," said the doctor, "and say nothing about it. It was your own shadow you saw."

Iconoclastic Age.

"A scientist says the ant is a much overrated insect."

"Not as industrious and intelligent as we have been led to believe?"

"That's it. Some of these days a scientist will rise up and tell us that an ostrich cannot digest doorknobs."

Three Needs of Christian Workers

By REV. B. B. SUTCLIFFE
Extension Department, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

* TEXT—Be of good courage and let us behave ourselves valiantly, and let the Lord do that which is good in his sight.—1 Chron. 19:13.

Joab, the commander in chief of David's army, found himself between two fires. The army of the Syrians opposed him on one side and the army of the Ammonites on the other. Employing the best tactics he knew and placing his army to the best advantage, he made an address to his men on the eve of battle. The text is part of that address which reminded them they were



about to fight for their people and the cities of their God. His exhortation might well be pondered by all Christians today and especially those who are more or less directly engaged in Christian work.

There are three things upon the surface of this text.

I. The Need of Courage.

It is said of some regiments in human armies that they are so foolish as never to know when they are beaten. It is not foolishness that is the trouble, but a high-hearted courage which will not admit defeat or which takes a defeat and wrestles it into a victory. The Christian worker, above all others, should have such good courage. He has a Leader who is possessed of all wisdom and knowledge—a Leader who knows the secret plans of the enemy. He is aware even of the secret thoughts of the enemy. He is never taken off his guard, or by surprise. He is fully informed of every movement. He gives promise to his people that no weapon formed against them shall prosper. He is a Leader who not only has all knowledge, but all power to use his knowledge. He is the Invisible One. Sometimes a man finds himself in possession of valuable knowledge which is useless to him because of a lack of power. He has not the ability to use what he knows. But unto our Lord has been given all power in heaven and in earth.

He of good courage, then, is one who adds we face, knowing that more with us than with the enemy. The message of the saint of old is well worth remembering—"One with God is always a majority." This is still true. God who gave the victory to his people in olden days is the same God. There is no change in our Leader. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. Following him, the Christian is assured of ultimate victory. It may seem as though we were hedged in by overwhelming forces and defeat is certain, but we may have good courage as we look away from the opposing hosts to the one whom we follow.

II. The Need of Valiant Behavior.

The Revised Version renders this by "play the man." It means simply to "do your best." To do one's best is to behave valiantly. No matter if others may do better than we, the need is to do our best. We are to "play the man" and not be like children who become discouraged because someone else does better than they can do. We must just keep on doing our part to the best of our ability. Much was dependent on each man of Moab's army behaving valiantly. Much more depends on each Christian doing his best. We must "play the man" for the honor of the name of him whose we are and whom we serve. He does not expect us to weakly surrender but to stand up to the fight, behaving ourselves valiantly; we must meet his expectations.

Then again, the well being of the church depends on each doing his best. The church is the body of Christ and we are all members of that body. If one member suffers, all the others suffer with it. When one member fails to behave valiantly, all the others are injured. On the other hand, all the members are blessed each time we do our level best. Again our own personal growth in grace follows such behavior. If we would be strong in faith, and experience the delight of the approval of our Lord, we will go forth to "play the man" in the name of our God.

III. The Need of Trust.

"Let the Lord do that which is good in his sight." We are not to think that results from our work shall be in accord with what we imagine they should be. He may have purposes to fulfill by our work other than we know. We are naturally eager to obtain results which are good in our own sight. We may make serious mistakes, not knowing all our Leader knows, and desire results which would not be good in his sight. We need to trust him fully; to believe he knows what is best; to revel in a high-hearted courage which grows from the certainty of final victory; to keep on doing our best and allow him to do that which is good in his sight, irrespective of whether it is good in ours or not.